

# **Notes On: 'Breakthrough Advertising – Eugene Schwartz'**

## **Mass Desire: The force that makes advertising work--and how to focus it onto your product**

- The copywriter's job isn't to create mass desire. It's to channel and direct it.
- Mass Desire is: The public spread of a private want.
- How to channel mass desire onto your product? A copywriter uses 3 tools: knowledge of peoples hopes, dreams, desires and emotions; your product; and the advertising message which connects the two.

### **1. Choose the most powerful desire that can possibly be applied to your product**

- Every mass desire has 3 dimensions. The first is Urgency, intensity, degree of demand to be satisfied. eg. constant arthritic pains compared to a minor headache. Not every desire is equal.
- 2. Staying power, the degree of repetition, the inability to become satiated. eg. raw hunger compared to craving for gourmet foods
- 3. Scope. The number of people who share this desire. The number of people who would pay \$10 for an accessory that saves gas, compared to one that merely prevents future repair bills.
- Every product appeals to two, 3, or 4 of these desires. But only one can predominate.

### **2. Acknowledge that desire--reinforce it--and/or offer the means to satisfy it-- in a single statement in the headline of your ad**

- Your headline touches your prospect at the awareness he has today.
- If he's aware of the product, and realized it can satisfy his desire, your headline starts with the product.
- If he isn't, and only of the desire itself, your headline starts with the desire.
- If he isn't aware of what he really seeks, and only concerned with a general problem, your headline starts with that problem and turns it into a specific need.

### **3. You take the series of performances that are build into your product--what your product does; and you show your prospect how these performances inevitably satisfy that desire**

- Every product you try to sell is actually 2 products. 1. a physical product. The steel, glass, writing etc. What it IS. and 2. The product in action, the series of benefits it provides for a consumer. What it DOES FOR THEM.
- The physical product doesn't sell. The important part of a product is what it does.

- The physical product is good for 1. justifying your price and 2. proving it can do what you're saying 3. Assuring that performance will continue through the years 4. sharpening the reader's mental picture of that performance
- Your first task in studying your product, is to list the number of different performances it contains. Group these against the mass desires that each of them satisfies.
- Your job is to find the one dominant performance that applies to the most powerful desire you chose, and put that in your headline.

## Your prospect's state of awareness - how to capitalize on it when you write your headline

- Your headline is based entirely off these 3 questions:
  - 1. What is the mass desire that creates this market?
  - 2. *How much do these people know today about the way your product satisfies this desire? (state of awareness)*
  - 3. How many other products have been presented to them before yours? (Sophistication of Market)
- Your headline shouldn't sell at all. The only job of your headline is to stop your prospect and compel him to read the second sentence of your ad. It doesn't need to mention your main appeal or even your product.
- The more of your story you can force your prospect to read, the more you can sell him.

### What your prospect's state of awareness demands from your headline:

- How aware is your prospect of his desire? How close to the surface of his consciousness? Is he aware only that a problem or need exists, or is he aware if they can be satisfied? And if he's aware it can be satisfied, does he realize that it lies in your group of products? Or specifically in your product by name?
- The more aware your market, the easier the selling job you have

#### 1. The most Aware.

*The customer knows of your product, knows what it does, knows he wants it*

-This requires nothing more than giving the most desirable selling point, adding the name of a store, and close.

#### 2. The Customer Knows of the Product But Does Not Yet Want It

*Here, your prospect isn't completely aware of all your product does, or is not convinced of how well it does it, or hasn't been told how much better it does it now.*

Your headline is faced with one of several tasks:

1. Reinforce your prospects desire for your product
2. Sharpen his image of the way your product satisfies that desire
3. Extend his image of where and when your product satisfies that desire
4. Introduce new proof, details, documentation of how well your product satisfies that desire.
5. Announce a new mechanism in that product to enable it to satisfy that desire even better
6. OR to completely change the image of the mechanism of that product, in order to remove it from the competition of other products claiming to satisfy the same desire

### 3. How to introduce new products

*The prospect knows, or recognizes immediately, that he wants what the product does*

- **Analysis** Define the market most receptive to your product, its location in relation to your product in terms of awareness, and the driving emotional forces that have created the market and the potential for the sales of your product within it

### 4. How to Introduce Products That Solve Needs

*The prospect has, not a desire, but a need. He recognizes the need immediately. But he doesn't yet realize the connection between the fulfillment of that need and your product. This is a problem-solving ad.*

- Here, you start by naming the need and/or its solution in your headline. The dramatize the need so vividly that the prospect realizes just how badly he needs the solution. And the present your product as the inevitable solution.

### 5. How to Open Up a Completely Unaware Market

*The most difficult. The prospect is either not aware of his desire or his need, or he won't honestly admit it to himself without being lead into it by your ad, or the need is too general and amorphous that it resists being summed up in a single headline, or it's a secret that just can't be verbalized.*

- These are logical prospects for your product, but a million miles away from accepted that product. It is your job to bridge that gap.

- Price means nothing to a person who does not know your product, or want your product.
- The name of a product means nothing to a person who has never seen it before.
- Your prospect must identify with your headline before he can buy from it.
- While styles of advertising change, the strategy does not. A narrative style might become old, but the power of evoking desires and channelling them is always going to be there.

## The sophistication of your market: How many products have been there before you?

As mentioned before, there are 3 questions before you determine what goes in your headline:

1. What is the mass desire that motivates your market?
2. How much does your market know about your product? (Their State of Awareness)
3. *How many similar products have they been told about before? (Their state of sophistication)*

### If you are first in your market

- You're dealing with prospects who have never received any information about such a product before.
- Once you get them interested, they are likely to become much more enthusiastic, believe more of what you say, and buy that much more readily. Your story is brand new to them.
- When a golden opportunity like this presents itself, you're most likely dealing with a market in its 3rd or 4th stage of awareness.
- The strategy to this is simple. 1. Be simple. Be Direct. Above all, don't be fancy. Same either the need or the claim in your headline, nothing more. Dramatize that

claim in your copy, make it as powerful as possible. And, then bring in your product; and prove it works.

- Nothing more is needed.

#### **If you're second, do this.**

- If you're second, and the direct claim is still working-- *Then copy that successful claim; but enlarge on it. Drive it to the absolute limit. Outbid your competition.*

#### **The Third Stage of Sophistication**

*Your prospects have heard all the claims, all the extremes, maybe even bought one or two competitive products.*

- One factor is vital. That's the *restorative* power of the market. Does the desire fade? Does it renew itself?
- It can't be tapped by old, simple methods any longer. Women still want to lose weight, but no longer believe the promises of losing 20,30,40 pounds in weeks.
- If your market is at this stage, then mere repetition or exaggeration won't work any longer. This market needs a new device to make all those old claims become fresh and believable. In other words; **a new mechanism**. A new way to making the old promise work. A different process.
- The emphasis shifts from what the product does to HOW it works. Not accomplishment, but performance becomes dominant. The mechanism of achieving the result.
- eg. instead of a direct claim like "I AM 61 POUNDS LIGHTER... NEVER HUNGRY A MINUTE".. stressing the mechanism is: "FLOATS FAT RIGHT OUT OF YOUR BODY" or.. "FIRST WONDER DRUG FOR REDUCING"
- This is for the headline. The mechanism is brought into the headline to establish a point of difference; to make old claims fresh and believable. And then, once the prospect is told that here is a brand new chance for success; *then the claim can be restated in full, to make sure that she realizes everything she is getting.*
- eg. "FLOATS FAT RIGHT OUT OF YOUR BODY!".. and as a subheading "Released for the first time! The amazing scientific discovery that melts up to 37 POUNDS off men and women"

#### **The Fourth Stage**

*You're still in a competitive market. And the 3rd stage ads only give a temporary advantage. They begin a new trend.*

- When competitors start introducing a new mechanism to achieve the same claim: Simply elaborate or enlarge upon the successful mechanism.
- Make it easier, quicker, surer; allow it to solve more of the problem; overcome old limitations; promise extra benefits.
- Like the second stage, it eventually gets pushed outside the realm of believability. More elaborations become ineffective.
- You have two alternatives: Discover a new, acceptable mechanism to make the promise fresh again. It must not only be new and legitimate; it must be accepted as believable and significant.
- Eventually, no new mechanism will gain acceptance.

### 5th stage: How to Revive a "Dead" Product

*Your market no longer believes in your advertising, and therefor no longer wishes to be aware of your product.*

- This stage is similar to Stage 5 of a prospects 'state of awareness'. The emphasis switches from the promise and mechanism, to identification with the prospect himself. You need to bring your prospect into your ad; not through desire; but through identification.

## 38 Ways to Strengthen Your Headline Once You Have The Basic Idea

*We have 'what' to say. Now we need to know 'how' to say it. You must reinforce the claim by binding other images to it with the words in which you express it. This is Verbalization.*

- It can strengthen the claim, by enlarging it, measuring it, making it more vivid etc
- It can make the claim new and fresh again. By twisting it, changing it, presenting it from a different angle, turning it into a narration, challenging the reader with an example
- It can help the claim pull the prospect into the body of the ad, but promising him information about it, by questioning him
- All these goals are achieved by adding variations, enlargements or embellishments to the main headline claim.
- They alter the main claim to make it more effective.
- First you need to determine the appeal itself. And then, how to shape the appeal into its most effective form in the headline.

Here are some guideposts:

- **Measure the size of the claim:** "I am 61 pounds lighter"... "20,000 filter traps in viceroy!"
- **Measure the speed of the claim:** "Feel better FAST!"... "In two seconds, bayer aspirin begins to dissolve in your glass!"
- **Compare the claim:** "Six times whiter washes!"..."Costs up to \$300 less than many models of the low-priced three!"
- **Metaphorize the claim:** "BANISHES corns!"..."Melts Away Ugly Fat!"
- **Sensitize the claim by making the prospect feel, smell, touch, see or hear it:** "Tastes like you just picked it"..."The skin you love to touch"
- **Demonstrate the claim by showing a prime example:** "Jake Lamotta, 160 pound fighter, fails to flatten mono paper cup"
- **Dramatize the claim, or its result:** "Here's an extra \$50, grace-- I'm making big money now!"... "They laughed when I sat down at the piano--But when I started to play..."
- **State the claim as a paradox:** "How a bald-headed barber saved my hair!"..."beat the races by picking losers!"
- **Remove limitations from the claim:** "Shrinks hemorrhoids without surgery!"..."you breathe no dusty odors when you do it with lewy!"
- **Associate the claim with values or people with whom the prospect wishes to be identified:** "Mickey Mantle Says: Camels Never Bother My Throat!"..."9 out of 10 decorators use xx carpets"
- **Show how much work, in detail, the claim does:** "Now! Relief From All 5 Acid-Caused Stomach Troubles, In Seconds!".. "relieves congestion in all 7 nasal passages instantly!"
- **State the claim as a question:** "Who else wants a whiter wash, with no hard work?".. "could you use an extra \$25 a week income?"

- **Offer information about how to accomplish the claim:** "How to win friends and influence people"
- **Tie authority into the claim:** "Boss mechanic shows how to avoid engine repair bills!"..."Here's what doctors do when they feel rotten!"
- **Before-and-after the claim:** "Before coldene a child got over a cold after 5 days of aching, sneezing, wheezing etc"..."with coldene a child gets over a cold in 5 days"
- **Stress the newness of the claim:** "ANNOUNCING! Guided missile spark plugs!"
- **Stress the exclusivity of the claim:** "Ours Alone! Persian lamb originals!"..."Only gleem has GL-70 to keep teeth clean all day long!"
- **Turn the claim into a challenge:** "Which twin has the toni? And which has the \$15 permanent?"..."Does she or doesn't she? Hair coloring so natural only her hairdresser knows for sure"
- **State the claim as a cave history quotation:** "Look, Mom, No Cavities!"... "would you believe it... i have a cold!"
- **Condense the claim, interchange your product and the product it replaces:** "NOW! A ring and piston job in a tube!".. "pour yourself a new engine!"
- **Connect the mechanism to the claim in the headline:** "floats fat right out of your body!"..."feeds waste gas fumes back into your engine!"
- **Startle the reader by contradicting the way he thinks the mechanism should work:** "hit hell out of the ball with your right hand' says tommy armour!"
- **Connect the need and the claim:** "there is only one solution to an advertising problem: find the man!"
- **Offer information in the ad itself:** "Why men crack..."..."What everybody ought to know about this stock and bond business"
- **Turn the claim or the need into a case history:** "Aunt Meg, who never married"..." Again she orders--A chicken salad, please"
- **Give a name to the problem or need:** "When you're weary with *Day-Time Fatigue*, Take ALka-Seltzer"
- **Warn the reader about possible pitfalls if he doesn't use:** "DON'T INVEST ONE CENT OF YOUR HARD EARNED MONEY UNTIL YOU"
- **Show how easy the claim is to accomplish by imposing a universally-overcome limitation:** "if you can count to eleven, you can increase your speed and skill at numbers!"
- **State the difference in the headline:** "The difference in premium gasoline is right in the additives"
- **Surprise your reader into realizing that former limitations have now been overcome:** "See what happens when you crush a hartman dc-8? Nothing!"
- **Address the people who can't buy your product:** "if you've already taken your vacation, don't read this, it'll break your heart"
- **Address your prospect directly:** "To the man who will settle for nothing less than the presidency of his firm"
- **Dramatize how hard it was to produce the claim:** "When jens finished designing this candleholder we had to invent a new kind of candle"
- **Accuse the claim of being too good:** "Is it immoral to make money this easily?"
- **Challenge the prospects present limiting beliefs:** "You are twice as smart as you think"
- **Turn the claim into a question and answer:** "You don't know what's under the hood and you couldn't care less as long as your car runs smoothly. Who should you see if it doesn't? Someone who cares -- United Delco"

# Summary: The art of creative planning - How to make an idea grow

## The Three Levels of Creativity

1. The most ineffective, is the Word-Substitute Technique. The copywriter looks at successful headlines, pulls out the original product name and substitutes his own. If they're copied from a similar product in the same market, at the same time, then the chance of success is good. Mostly they become echo ads that remind people of another product. They pay attention to unique product-market-timing relationship, so they lose their strengths.
  2. The second is through formulas. Here the copywriter has memorized a list of rules of principles. They usually concern the way a headline is expressed. Methods of strengthening the verbalization. But if an ad or headline demands its own shape, it cannot be fitted into someone else's solution.
  3. The third is an analytical approach. Which no answers, only guideposts and questions; offers the way.
- If you want to be successful, you must approach situations in the third way. If you want to be the **best**.

## On Motivation Research and Its relation to the Copywriter.

*The copywriters primary job is to know his market. He has to know more about the market than it knows about itself.*

The two great services Motivation Research can provide are:

1. Can give information about the most powerful needs and desires of his market. Desires that may be hidden, verbally unacceptable, or completely unknown. It shows him the strength of those desires. It helps him locate splits in the market, gauge their points of difference and design pinpoint appeals for each.
2. Testing his own hunches, in answering questions he uncovers in dealing with his market over a period of time.

## On expressing the personality of a product in your headline

- A product, or a store, or a whole group of products has a distinct and complete personality to the consumer. eg. In the case of the cadillac, it consists of quality, prestige, performance, appearance, comfort, resale value, freedom from repairs and much more.
- *one of these traits will always be the most effective in summarizing and expressing this personality. eg. on the cadillac, it is 'quality'*
- This trait is what's featured in a series of headlines.

## On the only prevention headline that will sell

- People are perfectly capable of imagining problems happening in the future to loved ones, friends, wives and children. This is why decay-preventing toothpaste sold so well when the ads focussed the decay, not on the parent, but the children. This is also why life insurance can be sold.

## On the selection of splinter markets to avoid competition

- There are different sub-categories in every market. eg. Those women who want to lose weight for appearance, and those who want health.
- A smaller company may choose to not compete for the whole market, but a sub-category. This deliberate focussing of the appeal would alter every aspect of the campaign. Eventually of course, if it's successful, the company can choose to go for the whole market.

## In Summary

- These 5 chapters describe a process that may take days, weeks or months to complete.
- It begins with a thorough analysis of the market for your product. Measuring the breadth and depth of that market - to identify the gigantic emotional forces that create that market - to define and focus those forces in terms of a single image or desire or need - and to channel those forces into your product.
- To do this, the second step involves study of the product itself - what it is and what it does - the physical product you will deliver and the functional product that you will sell. All its various satisfactions and performances - again focused to a single image, identification, claim that will tap the greatest possible emotional force within your market.
- Once you have the theme that's developed from the combination of these two, you begin expressing it. You learn the state of maturity of your market, you find out how much people know about your product and what it does- how much they've been told about similar products - and how much they care about both.
- This process may take weeks or even months. And at the end of that time, you may have written 5-10 words. These 5-10 words will make up about 90% of the value of your ad. If you're right, you may be a huge success. If you're wrong, nothing you write after them will save your ad.
- What you're looking for in this product and market is one element that makes them unique. The idea you want, the headline, the breakthrough, are all wrapped up inside the product and the market. Nowhere else. No outside formula will give them to you.

## How to write body copy as strong as your headline

- So your prospect has been stopped by your headline. He's reading your first paragraph.
- The aim of your body copy is to make your product emerge as the fulfillment of the dominant desire that caused this man to respond to the headline.

How long your copy should be is determined by 3 things:

1. How much you need to build his *desire* for that product - and everything it can do for him - **to its greatest strength**
2. how much you need to make him feel both comfortable and complimented by that product, to enable him to visualize that product as a part of his life structure that he built and is building
3. how much you need to make him believe what you have said

The answers to these 3 questions determine the length and also the structure, development, style and pace. Each question relates to a separate dimension in his mind. Different ways he has of arranging thoughts and feelings.



The 3 dimensions of thought and feeling:

### 1. Desires

- The wants, needs, cravings, thirsts, hungers that drive your prospect through life.
- They are physical. Such as the desire to be thin, strong or healthy, or free from acne.
- They are material, such as the desire to possess money or a big car or a beautiful dress.
- They are sensual, such as the thirst for a cold glass of beer, or the need for a tired body to stretch out on a soft bed.
- They already exist. You cannot create them, diminish them, or battle them. *But you can expand, sharpen, channel them and give them a goal. This is your primary task as a copywriter.*
- Your first task is to make your prospect *want*. To sharpen his desire. To picture every moment of its fulfillment. Let him see it, feel it, touch it, sit in it, listen to his friends rave about it. Make him visualize the new world your product offers so strongly he practically lives in it, and then to offer him the product.

### 2. Identifications

- These are the roles he wants to play in life. Also personality traits he wants your product to help him build or project.
- These aren't material or sensual at all. They complement and intensify the physical desires, make them serve a double duty. (eg. not only does a woman buy healthy food to be thin.. but in so doing she builds a radiant, attractive, youthful personality)
- They're goals, hopes, dreams, ambitions, envies, admirations, fantasies. They're never openly spoken projections. Picture for him the people who live in your products' world today.

### 3. Beliefs

- These are the opinions, attitudes, prejudices, fragments of knowledge and conceptions of reality that your prospect lives by.
- The world of emotionalized reason that he inhabits. The way he accepts or rejects facts and builds his universe.
- The types of thinking he uses to arrive at decisions. The ideas and values which give him comfort and which he believes are permanent and true.
- It is not advertising's mission to argue with them. No one advertiser can change them. It is not education.
- Advertising must accept reality as it is; only then can it alter reality. Not by smashing into it, but by exploiting its tendencies and giving direction to its energies.
- These beliefs form a filter through which your product-information must pass or be rejected.
- You start with these beliefs as a base, you build up from them using his logic, not your own, to prove your product satisfies his desires; to prove it works.

# The first technique of breakthrough copy: Intensification

## Thirteen Ways to Strengthen Desire

*The force that creates sales, that powers our economy, is desire. The art of salesmanship is primarily expanding this desire. Building it to such a pitch that it overcomes the obstacles of skepticism, lethargy and price.*

- Your job is to fill out the vague desires that your prospect has, with concrete images. To show your prospect every possible way that they can be fulfilled. To multiply their strength by the number of satisfactions that you can suggest to achieve them.
- Your job is to show him in minute detail all the tomorrows that your product makes possible for him
- The sharper you can draw your pictures, the greater number of them that you can *legitimately* present, the more your prospect will demand your product, and the less important will seem your price.
- Your prospect will take with him only one basic idea, one dominant image from your ad. But with every new and different way you can present that idea, it becomes sharper, more real, builds up more emotional weight.
- There are stages of market sophistication in your body copy, too. If your prospect has read the same phraseology before, he will be bored by it.
- You cannot repeat, but you can reinforce. Every time the same promise is given a fresh setting for your prospect, it reinforces the descriptions that went with it, and makes your prospect more determined to participate.

## Here are the techniques of intensification:

1. **First** present the product or the satisfaction it gives directly - bluntly - by a thorough completely detailed description of its appearance or the results it gives.
2. Now you've presented the description, you're ready to expand the image. One of the most effective ways to do this is to PUT THE PRODUCT IN ACTION for your reader. To show, not only how the product looks, and what benefits it gives the reader, but exactly how it does this.
3. Or, if the product lends itself to this kind of treatment, put your reader right smack in the middle of this product-in-action story, and give him a verbal demonstration of what will happen to him the first day he owns that product.
4. **Turn the demonstration into a test.** Let your reader visualize himself proving the performance of your product. Gaining its benefits immediately. In the most specific and dramatic way possible.
5. **Stretch out your benefits in time.** Show the product in action over a span of weeks and months. Extend their vision further and further into time. Showing him a continuous flow of benefits.
6. **Bring in an audience.** At the end of this passage, other actors besides the reader are brought into the scene. Each one of them-- each group of them-- provides a fresh new perspective through which your reader can view the product. Seen through their eyes, experienced through their actions and reactions - the product performances become new, vivid and completely different again.
7. **Show experts approving.** Not only celebrities and ordinary people can be used to affirm the product benefits. Experts in the field, professionals, the sophisticated. There is nothing so astounding as the astonishment of experts.
8. **Compare, contrast, prove superiority.** The competition can be carried into contrast. The disadvantages of the old product or service can be laid side by side with the advantages of the new.
9. **Picture the black side, too.** Here the negative aspect to every promise- the problem that you are liberating the prospect from forever - is painted in all its full black color. You irritate the wound, and then you apply the salve that heals it.

10. **Show how easy it is to get these benefits.** Stress the ease of application, contrast it with the tremendous benefits that application gives you.
11. **Use metaphor, Analogy, Imagination.** There are infinite opportunities for the use of imagination to present those facts in a more dramatic form, outside of the rigidly realistic approach.
12. **Before you're done, summarize.** Which of these you use in a single ad is a matter of timing and balance as you begin to put your ad together. As long as each additional fresh perspective continues to build the dominant desire in your prospect's mind, use it. But if the additional perspective is not different or dramatic enough to renew your prospect's interest in your claims, then leave it out.
13. There are two conventional summary devices which are almost always used. The first is 'catalog'. *A brief condensed listing of all the product's performances, benefits, and/or applications, one after the other, without description, dramatization or elaboration.*
14. **Put Your Guarantee To Work.** You can turn the guarantee into the climax of your ad. The last brief summary of your product's performances - reinforced at every step by the positive reassertion of that guarantee. "this x must x.. or your money back.. also, this x must x, or your money back!". Can even use this as your summary.

## The Second Technique of Breakthrough Copy: Identification

### How to build a saleable personality into your product

- There is another kind of desire that exists in the human mind - far more subtle; partly unconscious. It operates under such different rules, and is so different than the first. This is 'Longing for Identification'. A longing for expression.
- The process of *identification* is 'the desire of your prospect to act out certain roles in his life'. It is the desire of your prospect to define himself to the world around him - to express the qualities within himself that he values, and the positions he has attained.
- How do you use this? You turn your product into an instrument for achieving these roles. And also by turning your product into an acknowledgement that these roles have already been achieved.
- Every product you work on should give 2 separate reasons for buying. First, it should offer him the fulfillment of a physical need or want. Second, it should offer him a particular method of fulfilling that need, that defines him to the outside world as a particular kind of human being.
- The average american *selects* food. Food that will give him a certain role. Non-fattening because he wishes to be **youthful** and **slim**. Foods that come from every country because he wishes to be **cosmopolitan**, **adventurous** and **sophisticated**.
- There are two kinds of roles. Roles that define character, and roles that express achievement.

## Character Roles

- Usually expressed by adjectives, or adjectives-turned-nouns. "progressive".. "chic".. "charming".. "brilliant".. "well-read". They're part of the personality. They belong to him. His task is to pick out the ones he wants the most, and develop them.
- Attainment of these roles isn't enough. They must be acknowledged, valued and admired. Or they are worthless.
- Your product can serve in 3 distinct ways:
  - 1. It can help him achieve mastery of his chosen role. Such as a book on philosophy. If he wants to be thought of as well-read.
  - 2. It can help simplify condense or speed up this mastery. Such as a Speed-Reading Course.
  - 3. Most important. It can serve as a symbol of that mastery, to invoke the acknowledgement or admiration of his friends. Such as a shelf to house both books.
- There are some products where this ability of character-reinforcement, whether build into the product by design, society or advertising, (such as a high priced sports car, a Ferrari) far outweighs in sales value the build-in performance of the product. In these products, it is the role-giving function that sells. Not the performance.
- These character roles are not created by society, but by the prospect himself. They are almost never claimed openly, only hinted at, implied or prompted. They can never truly be tested or measured. They are subject to error, and subject to fantasy.
- The prospect rarely defines them even to himself. They aren't discussed or stated, but subtly expressed in symbols and images. Since he never tests them against the outside world, to see if they are actually true, your prospect is far more ready to believe in the character roles you assign to him, than he is to believe in your product's performance claims or achievement roles it may offer him.
- eg: virility can be implied by a test pilot smoking a cigarette. A prospect is easily going to persuade himself that the same action, smoking, performed on the same product, conveys to him at least some of the implied virility shown.

## Achievement Roles

- Status roles. Class roles. Position roles that are created by every society, and offered to the men and women who can earn them. "executive".. "home owner".. "\$200k a year man".. "man-on-his-way-up". Or for women: "wife".. "fashion setter".. "career woman".. "good mother".. The list of roles is endless.
- Each of these roles is an achievement to be won, and held, and *most of all, displayed*.
- *Every social role that we achieve in life is immediately translated into those possessions which we believe express that position most clearly*
- The 'man-on-his-way-up' for eg, trades in his Ford for a Buick. When he becomes an 'executive', trades in his Buick for a Cadillac

## How to put these longings for identification to work for your product

- Thus products become more than products. In addition to their physical functions, they take on new immaterial functions; as status definers. They announce our achievements, define our role in life, document our success.
- When you have a product the same as your competitors, where price is no longer a factor; **the prospects choice will almost overwhelmingly depend on the difference in role that your product offers him**. It's your job to create this role for him in your ad.
- This is the process of Identification. The second mechanism of persuasion.
- The method you use to put 'the desire for recognition' to work is the same pattern of discovery and magnification you would use for any other desire.

- First is to discover what character and achievement roles he is ready to identify with your product. What roles he will reject, and which accepted is most compelling. And then you present the chosen roles in a way, so vividly and intensely, that the role will become virtually irresistible.
- **You cannot force your market to accept an unrealistic identification.**
- People will assign characteristics to certain products. They may come from the product itself - its structure, performance, history, cost to produce or sell. Or they may be from the role / roles it plays in their lives today. Or they similar products play in their lives. Or these products play in lives of people they've seen, heard, read about.
- They may be true or false, profound, flattering or stupid. But as far as your product is concerned, they are hard as rock. They're facts. Don't try to break through them.
- The majority of products have no build in prestige. **You must create it. By building on the characteristics they already have, by using the accepted characteristics as a bridge, between the product; the image it already has; and the prestige-filled image you want to wind up with.**
- The most compelling roles are:
  - --To be virile or feminine
  - --To be exciting, unique, fun filled and adventurous
  - --to be friendly and well-liked
  - --to be important, influential and correct
  - --to be modern and up-to-date
  - --above all, to be successful, to make something of our lives

### The primary Image of Your Product

- There's a critical point that separates the process of building identification from building desire. *the product you are given has its own personality at the moment you are given it*
- eg. A cigarette is not, by itself, a symbol of success. But if it was, it would sell a lot more. A piston ring isn't a symbol of virility. If it was, it would sell many more.
- The first thing you need to do is identify the primary image that each product already has in the mind of your prospect.
- Your job then is to use these already-accepted images as raw material. *as a starting point to construct new, double, triple and quadruple images, that draw in more of these most-wanted roles into your product-personality, and multiply its identification appeal*
- You do this in 2 ways:
  - 1. By changing the intensity of your primary image. Emphasizing, dramatizing that primary image. If it is already acceptable. Or toning it down if negative or neutral.
  - eg. Marlboro took the image of virility and intensified it. They presented men who were, in themselves, virile. They presented these men in situations or occupations that demanded virility. They took the further 'creative gamble' of affixing to these men's hands one of the most primitive symbols of virility known to history-- the tattoo
  - -- If your primary image is negative, or neutral, a first suggestion may be to discard it entirely in favor of something attractive. It doesn't work. **You cannot contradict accepted images or beliefs in advertising.** In order to overcome these unfavorable images, you simply incorporate them in a larger, overall image. Lower their emotional intensity- and use them as readily-accepted bridges to lead your prospect into more compelling appeals.

## How to build new images into your product

- This is a single process that's made up of two steps.
- 1. As mentioned above, a change in intensity of your primary image.
- 2. Using it as a logical link to bring in a number of more favourable images.
- eg. "blow some my way" ad
- There is only one limit to the number, or range of favourable images you can add to the product personality. **simply that you must always include the primary image as their base**
- Marlboro can weave other powerful appeals into the base. Connotations of success can be included by clothing, such as a tuxedo or possessions he holds. Adventure and excitement can be suggested by the situation you picture him in. On a boat, in a plane, riding horseback etc

## The limits to the images your prospect will identify with

- These identification images can be powerful when used correctly, though there are strict rules and limits to their use. If used incorrectly, they can be disastrous.
- You have to make everything **believable**.
- In relation to image building, there are two points:
- 1. What do people already believe about the personality of your product? Do they believe, today, that it has the character traits you say it has? If they do, can they identify themselves, their lives, their present position in society, or their next step up in society with these traits? If yes you can use the image exactly as you conceived it.
- 2. What other primary image do I have to use as a believability bridge to connect what my prospect already believes with what I want him to believe when he finishes my ad?
- In addition, the prospect must see the traits relating to his life, as it exists in the present or the future. If not, you also have to use a bridge-image. First start with what he believes, then move him into something else. **Start on his side, and he will follow you almost anywhere.**

## On saleable identifications springing from the physical product itself

- Earlier we concentrated on the performances of a product, not what the physical product is. For creating an image, you can find it in the physical.
- The physical product can be broken down into 3 areas:
- 1. Its appearance
- 2. Its components and structure
- 3. The technical background from which it emerged
- Each one of these has image potential. In each one of them you may find strong primary images that already exist.

# The Third Technique of Breakthrough Copy: Gradualization

*How to make your prospect believe your claims before you state them*

- It is the fusion of desire and belief; the conviction; the certainty; the feeling in the prospect of being right in his choice; of being assured of what he has been promised; that the copywriter seeks as his ultimate goal.

## What is belief?

- First, it is his mental picture of the world he lives in. What facts make it up, how it works, in what direction its truths and values lie.
- These facts, truths, values and opinions are only the raw material of belief. *Even more important is the vast amount of emotional security he derives from these beliefs.*
- It's a wonderful feeling of comfort to live in a world that has meaning, where there are answers to be had, where somehow all the facts fit. A world he can understand and depend on. That he can predict. That will stay together and not blow up tomorrow morning.
- The need for secure beliefs is just as powerful an emotional force as the strongest desire for physical satisfaction, or the most urgent search for expression.
- **If you violate your prospect's established beliefs in the slightest degree, either in content or direction; then nothing you promise him, no matter how appealing, can save your ad.**
- *If you can channel the tremendous force of his belief, either in content or direction, behind only one claim, no matter how small, then that one fully-believed claim will sell more goods than all the half-questioned promises your competitors can write for all the rest of their days.* This channeling of belief is so powerful that, if properly directed, it will even support otherwise absurd claims.
- Belief cannot be changed. It must be complied with at every step.
- Every one of the statements you make in your ad must fit in with your prospects version of 'the facts' at that precise moment.
- You can't change the facts, *but you can build a bridge of belief between those facts as they exist in your prospects mind today -- and the ultimate facts your prospect must believe if he is to accept your claims.*
- The process of starting with the facts your prospect accepts, and leading him logically and comfortably through a gradual succession of more and more remote facts, each of which he has been prepared in turn to accept, is called Gradualization.
- The dominating desire of your prospect determines the content of your ad, the longings for identification and self-expression determine your illustrations. But gradualization determines the ad's development. The arrangement of your claim and your images and your proof. So there is a step-by-step strengthening -- not only of your prospect's desire-- but of his conviction that the satisfaction of that desire will come true through your product.

## The architecture of belief

- Every claim, image and proof has 2 sources of strength:
  1. The *content* of that statement itself
  2. The preparation you have made for that statement
- You can strengthen the power of a statement in 2 ways:
  1. Increase the intensity of the content: Make greater promises, portray more dramatic images, offer more compelling proof
  2. Change the position or sequence that statement occurs in the ad. Strengthen the groundwork for belief in the ad, by the material that precedes it.

## A new definition of awareness

- **Gradualization is the art of starting your ad with a statement that will be immediately and entirely accepted, and then building a chain of subsequent acceptances upon this first statement.**
- *The effectiveness of your headline is as much determined by the willingness of your audience to believe what it says, as it is the promises it makes*

- Your most powerful claim does not always make your most powerful headline. Simply because sometimes it's unbelievable, and needs to be worked up to.
- Build a habit of agreement. Get them to agree with you, repeatedly, and then move them to unknown ground. Get them saying "yes.. yes.. yes" "how many times have you x.. how many times have you x"
- Grammatical construction can be used. "Was your (something they agree with)....."Then... (something you want them to believe)".
- BE SPECIFIC. Say exactly what they'll save on. "save \$15-20 on repair bills" not just that they'll save.
- Work it up.
- You can build acceptance into a new statement in 4 ways:
  1. **Paragraph parallelism:** Framing the statement as the last of a series of similar statements. All of the others of which have already been accepted - instead of physically setting it off as a new point with its own sub head and a different construction.
  2. **Using the lead word "and" ..** A tie-in phrase, which indicates the sentence accompanying it is the same as those that have gone before.
  3. **Following 'and' by a second tie-in phrase,** "most important," which again implies that the remainder of the statement is part of the series that has gone before
  4. **Echoing an identifying subhead earlier in the series,** which will carry on the acceptance-momentum of the series as a whole.
- The introduction of a product claim itself, may be far more effective if it is delayed til the prospect has been prepared to accept it
- Willingness to believe without question, and acceptance, can gradually be build up, layer by layer, agreement by agreement.
- One fully-believed promise has **ten** times the sales power of ten partially-believed promises.

### How do you strengthen this believability structure? What can you use to add believability to any promise?

- **The Inclusion Question:** Designed to show the prospect you're talking about *him*. Not someone who would answer No to the question. Once he has identified with the questions, once he has made his first agreements, then your recommendations will have special meaning. eg. "do you xx.. do you xx.. is your xx.. are you xx" *don't make it so that a large majority WILL say no though*
- **Detailed Identification:** Instead of asking questions to set up your Yes-Train, you detail symptoms of problems that are your prospect's reasons for desiring your product. Again, so your reader knows that you're talking about *him*. Your recommendations will answer **his** problems. eg. "I don't care whether your child is six years old or twenty - boy or girl - in grade school or high school or college. It makes no difference how badly that child is doing in school today - how difficult it is for him to concentrate...how poor his memory may be.. how much a prisoner he is of crippling mental habits"
- Of course, all these must be accurate. You must know the reader's problems to make every word you write ring true.
- **Contradiction of Present (False) Beliefs:** You come out bluntly and say "I know you think this is true; but I'm going to show YOU it's false". Best used in conjunction with strong authority; strong enough to contradict present (unpleasant) beliefs, and get away with it. Not looking for agreement as much as you are for a loosening of previous beliefs.
- **The Language of Logic:** Your objective is to build belief at the same time that you build desire. To do this, *interlace every new promise with language-signals that show that it logically follows from everything that has been proved before. And that is*



*therefore can be believed without hesitation.* Use words such as "the reason for".. "simply".. "as an example".. "there is a basic, underlying reason for this".. "sound impossible? not at all. it's actually as simple..." .. "here's why:".. "therefore..."

- **Syllogistic Thinking:** One statement inevitably leads to another. "The larger the spark is, the more powerful the explosion.. The more powerful the explosion, the more power you get from your gasoline"
- **Other Belief Forms:** Arrangement of your claims can add to their believability:
- 1. *contingency structures:* "if... then..."... "is your.. then..."
- 2. *Repetition of proof:* Echoing - such as "these experts found... these experts found... these experts found"
- 3. *Paragraph Parallelism:* Where the same word structure used in an accepted statement is then picked up exactly, and used to borrow acceptance for a fresh claim.

## The Fourth Technique of Breakthrough Copy: Redefinition

*Redefinition is the process of redefining your product. It says that the product is **this** rather than **that**. Its objective is to remove a roadblock to your sale - if possible, before the prospect even knows it exists*

How to remove objections to your product.

- Some products have certain drawbacks that intensify resistance to buying.
- Three general categories of drawbacks are:
- 1. A product that looks (or sounds) too complicated - too hard to use
- 2. A product that is not important enough - whose basic appeal doesn't have a statistically broad enough market
- 3. A product that costs too much. Its price is so much above the price of other products in its class that people simply turn away when it's mentioned.
- **Simplification:** Whenever there is a process which is difficult.. Whenever there is a product which is hard to use, or difficult to apply -- the copywriters first task is to simplify that application in his buyers mind.
- **Escalation:** You're dealing with a product that works, which is easy enough to use, but doesn't have an appeal broad enough to assure it of a mass market. You need to broaden the horizon of benefits of the product. Widen the area of reward your product yield to the prospect. Show him it enters into dozens of vital situations every day, paying off where he might least expect it.
- **Price Reduction:** Your job is to make the price seem less. You do it by an act of redefinition. Why does the product cost so much? because it's being compared with other products in the same field. How do you whittle away, psychologically, at this price? By switching the comparison, and relating it to some other, more expensive standard.

# The Fifth Technique of Breakthrough Copy: Mechanization

How to verbally prove that your product does what you claim

- Included in the reactions your prospect will have to your copy, are a number of anticipations, demands or questions on his part, and you must answer these questions or your copy will fail. They fall into 3 classes:
- 1. Demands for more information, more image, more desire. You've whetted his appetite; now you've got to satisfy it. He's saying "Tell me more."
- 2. Demands for proof. He knows he wants it; now he wants to know that it's true. He's saying: "oh yeah? who says so?"
- 3. Demands for a mechanism. He knows he wants the end result; now he wants to know how you're going to give it to him. "How does it work?"
- To write good copy, you have to be both copywriter *and* prospect. You need to develop a foolproof sensitivity to these inevitable reactions. You need to know when they're going to come in. You have to anticipate them.

## Verbal Proof

- This is the vital question: "How does it work?". He's asking you to give him a mechanism. You need to demonstrate your product, in words, logically, so that he can understand exactly HOW it gives him the end result you promise. This can also be called "Reason Why" copy.
- State of awareness comes into this. Is he familiar with the mechanism by which this product works? Does he accept it?

## Stage One: Name the Mechanism

- The prospect is already familiar with the way they work from other ads he has seen, and any further detailing of the nuts and bolts would bore him.
- Simply name them, and go on to compete with your price.

## Stage Two: Describe the Mechanism

- It can be:
- 1. Because the prospect doesn't understand their mechanism
- OR 2. Because everybody else has the same mechanism, and the same promise, and the same price. The market is getting tired, and you need a new way to compete.
- For 1. You can't simply name the mechanism. You have to describe it. So you build a strong, quick promise - and then you follow up with a reason why you can deliver that promise.
- The first rule of mechanism copy is that it is NOT scientific discourse. You must never allow it to become dull, or merely factual. Load it with promise, load it with emotion.

## Stage Three: Feature the Mechanism

- You're at a stage of what to do when your market is highly sophisticated. Promises sound alike, price competition is suicidal.
- Give them a NEW way to get what they want. A new mechanism, a new chance to satisfy your desire. Even if everything else you've tried has failed you.

## The importance of mechanism when you want to convince your reader that you're giving him a bargain

- A price cut, like a product advantage; is only as good as your words, and your strategy, makes it.
- Price cuts must be justified. There must be a reason for them. A mechanism behind them.

## The Sixth Technique of Breakthrough Copy: Concentration

*How to destroy alternate ways for your prospect to satisfy his desire*

- There are several ways of beating competition, let's stop and review the ones we've mentioned.
- 1. Superiority of product. The ultimate weapon. If you have the best product, your advertising has a hundred times the chance of success.
- 2. Superiority of promise. A stronger promise, that evokes more desire. A wider promise, that causes more people to buy. A more believable promise, that brings in the skeptics as well as the susceptible.
- 3. Product role. The role the product allows its consumer to play. The identification, the status, the excitement you can bring out of your product.
- 4. Response and reaction. The ability to one-up the competition. To escalate claims when necessary.
- 5. Direct attack. The mechanism of *concentration*.

### What Concentration Is

- Concentration is much more than an attack on a competitor's product. You also need to show what your product provides, which the other lacks.

- Concentration is the process of pointing out weaknesses in the competition, emphasizing their disservice to your prospect, and **then proving to him that your product gives him what he wants without them.**

- A good way of using it is to go in a sequence of "bad.. good.. bad.. good".. "competitor's product does this badly.. mine however does this"
- Another thing is to select words carefully, use ones that contrast the weakness of your competitor, and use ones that sound more powerful for your own.

### A Second Strategy

- The first strategy isn't always feasible, however. The points you wish to contrast may not be so easily and clearly broken down.
- you would use something that looks more like this: What happens to you now, with the products you are using presently. What will happen when you switch to the new product.
- It doesn't necessarily need to be long. It can be 2-3 sentences, or a single phrase, such as "SHRINKS HEMORRHOIDS WITHOUT SURGERY".

# The Seventh Technique of Breakthrough Copy: Camouflage

*How to borrow conviction for your copy*

- When someone chooses a publication to read, he has faith in it usually. Some of his trust carries over from the editorial pages to the advertising pages.
- That publication phrases things a certain way. That phraseology begins to carry an aura of truth all by itself no matter what material it embraces.
- You can do this through your format too. Through images, and making your ad as similar as possible to the newspaper you're advertising in.
- You can borrow things like an Issue date, city of origin, or a by-line. (By Claire Hoffman under the headline.)
- Study the channels of communication that people believe in. Adopt their tone, their feel, their style, their sincerity. Make your ads *blend in*.

## Two other idioms to escape 'hard sell' stereotype

- Use understatement. Simplicity. A lack of color words. Fewer adjectives than the reader would expect. No superlatives. Short sentences, that fall rather than rise in tone at their end.
- Employ *deadly sincerity*. Leaning over backwards to point out the flaws in an offer, so that the benefits will be believed much more deeply.

## The Final Touches

- Now that we know how to reach out to a prospects mind on all three emotional levels: Desire, Identification and Believability. We have to put all these elements together.

## Verification - How to offer authorities and proof

- Proof can be used anywhere in your copy. But you need to place it properly for it to have optimal effect.
- Proof copy is also selling copy. It must offer the kind of proof that makes the prospect hungry to read every word of it.
- Proof - like claims - is most effective when the reader unconsciously demands it, and when he is ready to accept its content as necessary and logical.
- The four processes that determine position in your ad are:
- **Gradualization:** the development of a stream of acceptances from your reader to your statements, leading finally to an inevitable demand on the part of that reader for your product
- **Redefinition:** the removal of preconceived objections on the part of your prospect toward your product, by providing him a new definition of that product
- **Mechanization:** the verbal proof that your product works - that it does what you say it does
- **Concentration:** the verbal proof that other alternate products do not do this essential function as well.
- Each of these is effective not only at increasing the believability of your claims, but also your *proof*.
- In each of these processes is a place for your proof to appear, where it will do twice as much good as it would anywhere else.

### **Reinforcement - How to make two claims do the work of four**

- **Two emotional images, joined together in the right way; can often have TEN TIMES the impact that either of these images has by itself** *eg. the Avis campaign, the main theme was "we try harder" good by itself, but then combine it with "We're only second"*

### **Interweaving - how to blend emotion, image and logic into the same sentence**

### **Sensitivity - How to give your reader what he demands step in step throughout the copy**

- You must be not only the writer, but also the reader.

### **Momentum - How to draw your reader deeper and deeper into your copy**

- The point of these is to get people to read your copy. To get them into it.
- There are two types of momentum-builders:
  - 1. Actual momentum phrases
  - 2. Incomplete statements, or teasers, that draw the reader further into the copy in order to complete them.
- The first type, you insert them primarily into your transition sentences, to keep interest from flagging. Here are a few examples:
  - "Here is the information you will find in this book"
  - "Let me explain"
  - "All I ask from you is this"
  - "For example -"
- They're invitations to read on.
- The second way is more subtle. It's based on the principle of if YOU make a statement that interests the reader, and if you purposely and skillfully do not complete that statement, so that there is a question of how it can be done, then he will read on to find out more.
- You are continually throughout the copy: 1. creating interest in a specific point
- 2. raising a question (creating curiosity) in his mind about that point
- 3. implying an answer to that question later in the copy
- Examples:
  - "And YOU will do it often using nothing more than ordinary tap water, your own ten fingers, and the contents of your garden and your refridgerator"
  - "How to grow thousands of flowers - without dirtying your hands"
  - "caught! 120 fish in one hour!"
- Again, remember, each of these statements is loaded with sell. Don't waste words.

### **Mood - How to pack your copy with drama, excitement, sincerity or any other emotion you wish**

- Words and rhythms. They are to the copy writer what line and color are to the painter. They set the mood and emotion of your story in a subtle way.
- Example: And when that third precious ingredient reaches those buds - then that very morning you will open the door to your house - AND YOU WILL BE BLINDED BY THE EXPLOSION OF COLOR THAT GREET'S YOU IN YOUR GARDEN!
- Image-sharpeners - are words that are descriptive visually (weighted down . . . solid, blazing rows . . . so thick you can't even see a leaf in between etc).
- Emotion-definers - tell the reader how to feel (precious . . . that very morning . . . blinded . . . greets . . . you never imagined before etc)

- The level of sophistication of your audience will reveal what process to use per ad channel (people should feel your words, not classify them as emotional words)
- Words and rhythms add to the power and momentum too (absorb facts like a sponge, and repeat them almost word for word years later, and flash through math, business, financial problems that have you stopped cold today etc)
- The power words above all build on top of each other, and even sink into each other to make the claims stronger.
- The power words also are in tone, very factual, no nonsense words, which is common sense and can be absorbed by anyone.